to make their decision to send me over here. Gene supplied Jim with a 3 page typed letter, which he sent complete to Dr. Sargent, in which there were about 14 charges made, some quite true, others plainly gossip & petty. Dr. Sargent, after reading the letter, labelled it "vicious" & Laubach as "hostile witness". Gene said I talked endlessly at rehearsals (which I did), & reviewed my personal life (yes) and only got along with women such as Irene Brandt & Mrs. Taylor, because I cooed just then around (!), had money remaining in the budget when I was asking for more (!), ~~[illegible]~~ spent wildly (we concluded he meant my own money), lost singers because of the way I abused them, not because of the pay (which appears strange when Fred Swann is now paying 2 & 3 times what I was), and so forth.

Dr. Sargent said I needn't try to defend myself; Dr. Mason said it was only natural for a man to want to defend himself! So, alone, and 5000 miles from the scene, I wrote Jim a very long letter trying to refute what I felt was wrong, & admitting what I knew was true. Being nearly beside myself, I asked him if he felt it was right for a Chief of Staff to go around saying he (Jim) was "hopped up on drugs"[2]. On Budget Sunday Gene had told me to delay the anthem 4 minutes, but when Jim sat down he was extremely tense & nervous & motioned for me to start. I tried to signal him that I was to wait 3 more minutes but he insisted I begin. I told Fred we had to go on, so we did, leaving a long pause at the end, for the pledges were still being gathered. After the service Gene told me not to pay any attention to him, as he was "hopped up on drugs". He said the same thing to Irene Brandt, since I came over here, on one Sunday when Jim forgot his sermon & had everyone upset for fear he was ill. I asked Jim in this letter why there was so much bitterness & unhappiness at Riverside, why Polk left so disillusioned & frustrated, why Jack Summerfield said goodbye to me with "You're lucky to get out of the God damned place for awhile". I said we need it had a decent Chief of Staff since Ironside left! This was too much, I know it now, I didn't then. If Jim showed Gene this letter, it has done its harm. I can only plead that I have never known such loneliness, such utter despair as being here for weeks & weeks, seeing only 2 doctors, my ward porter & waitresses. I walk as much as I am able & I read as much as I can, but the medicine affects my vision & I can't do much, so I sit or sleep or brood. Both doctors have become so concerned for the amount of time I am alone that they suggested a project, so for the past 3 weeks I have been studying French at Berlitz but I still have much free time. I have gone to a concert or a play every night, in order to get out of my Hotel room,

for all concerned, perhaps. Virgil was the frightest ten years ago, & I actually never have gotten past the fear of being fired again when I saw Chamberlain out, Wilkey out, when I know what I do about how Jesse has been treated, Virgil out (yes, for reasonable cause, I suppose) and others up & down the tower, I know I can not escape the same sort of fate, if the cause is just. I am having a hard time finding a reasonable cause, there lies my trouble. They announced to the congregation I am "on leave", Dr. McCracken & Irene both talked to the choir about my leave & my return, Jim's letters speak of it, Fitch's letters speak of it, so the doctors I do not understand what is going on. Anna Brandt has become so upset over it her own doctor & her boss have insisted she withdraw from the choir, if not the Church. At the moment she is on two weeks sick-leave! The members sustain me with their expressions of love & faith & concern, as do some in the congregation.

You have known me for 21 years and I believe you could say I am not basically evil. I wish I had the steady faith you have, but you have worked at it and thought & prayed about it for many years. All my life I have lived with Christians, near all the same opportunities for prayer you have, but I have neglected so many that I can't expect to make up all that lost time in 4 months. It is not that I have never prayed, it is that it has been irregular and usually when in desperates. Of course, I will say that the past 5 years have found me more often "working" at it than before and even in my worst times here I have felt the presence of Christ instantaneously if I paused long enough to seek it. I suppose that in order to avoid facing the spiritual help I needed, I filled nearly every hour with work in the past 3 years, and ended up a wreck. Dr. Mason has asked me several times what I think I can put in the place Virgil filled, & I have no answer. Both he & I know work alone won't do it, but if I can ease up in that area and continue to foster the spiritual area, I won't need to search, I will be given the answer by more prayer & hope & a better love than I have ever known.

So, altho' I plan on going to Rome & then driving, I do not know what final word will come from Riverside. I am planning on returning on the Queen Mary, June 22 nd. If I learn anything in the next week or by April 1st, I will send you word in Vienna of any change of plan to see you in Genoa. I go to Hotel Continental, Via Cavour 5, Roma until March 30. I hope we can meet, and I pray I have not troubled you with this long & painful story. Because of our long friendship & your steady concern for me, I have perhaps gone on much too

long.

Have a safe and restful trip and I hope both you + Sunny can return refreshed and strengthened for Barnstable.

Love,

Dick

March 10, 1967

dear Irene:

Your most welcome letter arrived at noon and trusting you will excuse this type paper, I am answering immediately, as you requested. I wrote Judy on the 8th, not having your N.Y. address by simple oversight, and told her I hoped we could meet, so she may write you and me, explaining your schedule. Mine is extremely tentative at the moment and I will disclose why as I write.

I did wonder why I had not heard anything more about your trip, and assumed you did not receive my letter sent to Barnstable. Now that I know, I am sorry to learn of Sunny's continuing trouble physically and hope, with you, the trip will help alleviate her pain. I have something like travelling arteritis and one day it is my hand, then my right jaw, then a hip, etc. + the best I can do is take aspirin. Sometimes diet and exercise help us, but not always. The pains of old age(?) are not all mental, I find. I am trying to care for your eyesight, after years of keeping at the Harper history, by using this ruled paper, for my writing is often unreadible to me.

About my plans, at this moment I hope to leave here March 20 for Rome, to stay until March 31, when I will fly to Zurich to pick up a Volkswagen and return to Italy to drive for a month. The one place I see that we could meet is in Genoa, and I have just finished re-dating my planned trip south so that I will arrive in Genoa on the 13th and leave on the 15th. I hope we can manage this brief period (from 2.00 or thereabouts on the 14th until you go aboard again or earlier) for I need to see you and it will make the trip more exciting, I hope for all three.

I was so grateful for Jesse's call and the news of your coming. Naturally, I was saddened by the news of Mrs. Beckmann's death, even tho' expected + probably merciful. She and Mrs. Burke interested themselves in me + my mother shortly after we arrived at Riverside in 1946, and they have been close and dear friends to me for these 20 years.

I am not too good mentally, for I am very depressed over what I hear and from the way things seem (or appear) to be going. I am not sure just what I have told you, so please excuse me if I repeat. I had had what I thought was one of the best vacations during August + Sept. that I had ever had. Mrs. Maude Taylor and I had driven to Banff + Lake Louise + down the west coast and home, doing about 12,500 miles. As usual, I found the chair somewhat relaxed + out of control, for Marilyn Keiser, tho' very good, is inexperienced in so big a job, and work had slipped. I went at things pretty intensively and I suppose, drove everyone very hard for the first week or two but' I felt by the middle of October I had my "old"

group back again. To my amazement I was summoned to Gene Tunbridge's office on Wed. morning, Nov. 6, and told there was a "gift of money earmarked for one Richard Weagly, and him only, for an 8-month leave". Along with this was the idea that I was to see a doctor in London, arranged for by Dr. McCracken. I was to leave immediately! Present were Carroll Fitch & Lily Fisher. I was so stunned I hardly knew how to answer, but I was not asked for an opinion, I was told this was a fact. I refused to go immediately, for I brought "Dona Nobis" to Riverside, no one else does it in N.Y. and I had it ready to go on Nov. 10. They accepted this, but from that moment I cancelled 30 pupils and practically ended all activity at the Church. I am receiving my full salary, they are giving me $500.00 each month to cover my loss of income from teaching; they paid up $4000.00 of debts on loans I have been carrying for years, and they are paying all the cost of the time abroad. Carroll Fitch was extremely helpful & considerate with me and I had two brief but satisfactory sessions with Jim.

When I arrived here I did not know what doctor I was to see nor for how long. They had consulted with Dr. Cotton in N.Y., who is associated with the Church &, I believe, a deacon, & another psychiatrist, both men agreeing that Dr. Wm. Sargant over here was the best man in England, if he would see me. Before I left N.Y. Jesse Lyons had proposed that I have a thorough physical, as I had been losing blood rectally, so I saw Dr. Donald Hoskins, a deacon, also. He was appalled at my emotional state and placed me on sedatives so I could manage to get myself on the way, & said I should have been under a doctor's care before they told me I was to go. Of course, I have never seen this Dr. Cotton nor him, me. Anyhow, it was a shock to be sent 3000 miles away just when I had begun my 21st year at one I had looked forward to. Dr. Sargant agreed to see me, but after three visits said he saw no reason for me to continue as the medicine he was giving me was evidently helping me sleep & relax, & I could go home as far as he was concerned. I wrote as much to Fred Swann, who must have relayed it to Gene, for he telephoned immediately to Dr. Sargant to find out what he was doing, that I could so quickly be helped & cured. Accordingly, Dr. Sargant sought a 2nd opinion from a colleague, Dr. Alan Mason, so I have been seeing two psychiatrists each week for nearly 4 months. They both say I must "play the game" as it appears something very strange is going on at home. Since they had so little information to go on, Dr. Sargant wrote Dr. McCracken asking for details of what they thought was wrong with me & what had caused them

but for the last 2 weeks I can not concentrate.

Dr. McCracken wrote to Dr. Sargent and told him "there is a body of people who do not want me back". We do not know whether this means one person or just what, but it made Sargent so angry he wrote a letter, that, he told me, he could not send. They assume that they are being "used as cats-paws" to have me fired. Both doctors have written strong letters saying that morally, if not legally, they can't do such a thing to a man they claimed was ill & sent away 3000 miles. Dr. Mason told me yesterday that he had said in his letter to Dr. McCracken that if they intended to fire me, they should bring me home now, but if they didn't, then to decide, he (Jim) could continue to straddle the fence. They feel that Jim is an invalid & can't make up his mind, & therefore he decides everything through the means of an assistant (or Irene).

We have discussed freely, which is natural, the ending of my relations with Virgil, his losing his job, my mother's death, the loss of $15,000.00, etc., etc. and I can see that the last three years have brought me to the very edge of disaster, but if I had cancer or a heart condition, any business would give me the opportunity to show I was useful & worthy of some kind of trust. The doctors and I can not find what I have done that is so evil that I must be fired after 21 years, at 58, within 7 years of retirement. I have written Irene trying to explain why I am in the mental & spiritual state I am, after the ending of a 34 year friendship, & that I undoubtedly have mistrusted everyone under the circumstances, but that I can do better, must do better, & can't he find it in his heart to help me up again. I have had no reply. I am bombarding my mind & spirit with daily and lengthy sessions of Phillips' New Testament, Dr. Fosdick's "Meaning of Prayer", Thomas à Kempis, etc. and if this time does nothing else it has shown me I have done very little examination of myself over the years, yet have been constantly & mercifully in God's care. Some days I am nearly unable to function, others I find lifted up and guided by a Spirit supporting mine. I have never known such a test and the doctors say they are surprised I have been able to "take it".

If I must leave Riverside, I must, and yet I know God will lead me into some useful work. I love Riverside, have tried to give my utmost best there, & there is no place for me after that, but if they feel my usefulness is ended, or my character a detriment, I have no recourse but to learn how to face it, not expect a miracle by my prayers. I am no fighter, really, & would not know how to defend myself against them, & it would be wrong